GEOCRITICISM AND SPATIAL LITERARY STUDIES

Series Editor:

ROBERT T. TALLY JR., Texas State University

Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies is a new book series focusing on the dynamic relations among space, place, and literature. The spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences has occasioned an explosion of innovative, multidisciplinary scholarship in recent years, and geocriticism, broadly conceived, has been among the more promising developments in spatially oriented literary studies. Whether focused on literary geography, cartography, geopoetics, or the spatial humanities more generally, geocritical approaches enable readers to reflect upon the representation of space and place, both in imaginary universes and in those zones where fiction meets reality. Titles in the series include both monographs and collections of essays devoted to literary criticism, theory, and history, often in association with other arts and sciences. Drawing on diverse critical and theoretical traditions, books in the Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies series disclose, analyze, and explore the significance of space, place, and mapping in literature and in the world.

Robert T. Tally Jr. is an associate professor of English at Texas State University, USA. His work explores the relations among narrative, representation, and social space in American and world literature, criticism, and theory. Tally has been recognized as a leading figure in the emerging fields of geocriticism, spatiality studies, and the spatial humanities. Tally’s books include Fredric Jameson: The Project of Dialectical Criticism; Poe and the Subversion of American Literature: Satire, Fantasy, Critique; Utopia in the Age of Globalization: Space, Representation, and the World System; Spatiality; Kurt Vonnegut and the American Novel: A Postmodern Iconography; and Melville, Mapping and Globalization: Literary Cartography in the American Baroque Writer. The translator of Bertrand Westphal’s Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces, Tally is the editor of Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies; Kurt Vonnegut: Critical Insights; and Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative.

Titles to date:

Cosmopolitanism and Place: Spatial Forms in Contemporary Anglophone Literature
By Emily Johansen

Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative
Edited by Robert T. Tally Jr.

The Geocritical Legacies of Edward W. Said: Spatiality, Critical Humanism, and Comparative Literature
Edited by Robert T. Tally Jr.
Also by Robert T. Tally Jr.

Fredric Jameson: The Project of Dialectical Criticism

Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative (editor)

Poe and the Subversion of American Literature: Satire, Fantasy, Critique

Spatiality

Utopia in the Age of Globalization: Space, Representation, and the World-System

Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies (editor)

Kurt Vonnegut and the American Novel: A Postmodern Iconography

Kurt Vonnegut: Critical Insights (editor)

Melville, Mapping, and Globalization: Literary Cartography in the American Baroque Writer
THE GEOCRITICAL LEGACIES
OF EDWARD W. SAID

SPATIALITY, CRITICAL HUMANISM,
AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Edited by
Robert T. Tally Jr.
For Mélanie Heydari
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The spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences has occasioned an explosion of innovative, multidisciplinary scholarship. Spatially oriented literary studies, whether operating under the banner of literary geography, literary cartography, geophilosophy, geopoetics, geocriticism, or the spatial humanities more generally, have helped to reframe or to transform contemporary criticism by focusing attention, in various ways, on the dynamic relations among space, place, and literature. Reflecting upon the representation of space and place, whether in the real world, in imaginary universes, or in those hybrid zones where fiction meets reality, scholars and critics working in spatial literary studies are helping to reorient literary criticism, history, and theory. Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies is a book series presenting new research in this burgeoning field of inquiry.

In exploring such matters as the representation of place in literary works, the relations between literature and geography, the historical transformation of literary and cartographic practices, and the role of space in critical theory, among many others, geocriticism and spatial literary studies have also developed interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary methods and practices, frequently making productive connections to architecture, art history, geography, history, philosophy, politics, social theory, and urban studies, to name but a few. Spatial criticism is not limited to the spaces of the so-called real world, and it sometimes calls into question any too facile distinction between real and imaginary places, as it frequently investigates what Edward Soja has referred to as the “real-and-imagined” places we experience in literature as in life. Indeed, although a great deal of important research has been devoted to the literary representation of certain identifiable and well-known places (e.g., Dickens’s London, Baudelaire’s Paris, or Joyce’s Dublin), spatial critics have also explored the otherworldly spaces of literature, such as those to be found in myth, fantasy, science fiction, video games, and cyberspace. Similarly, such criticism is interested in the relationship between spatiality and such different media or genres as film or television, music, comics, computer programs, and
other forms that may supplement, compete with, and potentially problematize literary representation. Titles in the *Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* series include both monographs and collections of essays devoted to literary criticism, theory, and history, often in association with other arts and sciences. Drawing on diverse critical and theoretical traditions, books in the series reveal, analyze, and explore the significance of space, place, and mapping in literature and in the world.

The concepts, practices, or theories implied by the title of this series are to be understood expansively. Although geocriticism and spatial literary studies represent a relatively new area of critical and scholarly investigation, the historical roots of spatial criticism extend well beyond the recent past, informing present and future work. Thanks to a growing critical awareness of spatiality, innovative research into the literary geography of real and imaginary places has helped to shape historical and cultural studies in ancient, medieval, early modern, and modernist literature, while a discourse of spatiality undergirds much of what is still understood as the postmodern condition. The suppression of distance by modern technology, transportation, and telecommunications has only enhanced the sense of place, and of displacement, in the age of globalization. Spatial criticism examines literary representations not only of places themselves, but of the experience of place and of displacement, while exploring the interrelations between lived experience and a more abstract or unrepresentable spatial network that subtly or directly shapes it. In sum, the work being done in geocriticism and spatial literary studies, broadly conceived, is diverse and far-reaching. Each volume in this series takes seriously the mutually impressive effects of space or place and artistic representation, particularly as these effects manifest themselves in works of literature. By bringing the spatial and geographical concerns to bear on their scholarship, books in the *Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* series seek to make possible different ways of seeing literary and cultural texts, to pose novel questions for criticism and theory, and to offer alternative approaches to literary and cultural studies. In short, the series aims to open up new spaces for critical inquiry.

*Robert T. Tally Jr.*
Edward W. Said’s literary criticism, scholarship, and advocacy have supplied a seemingly inexhaustible resource for further study and action, and his work continues to make possible new research in comparative literature, in the humanities, and in the wider world. In organizing, arranging, and editing this volume, I have found inspiration in Said’s work, particularly in his steadfast commitment to literature, criticism, and theory as necessary components of socially conscious, politically engaged, and altogether worldly critical practices in our time and place.

This project first took shape as a seminar on geocriticism and the legacies of Edward Said at the American Comparative Literature Association’s 2013 convention in Toronto. The theme of the meeting, “Global Positioning Systems,” was especially well suited to our seminar topic, all the more so given that the ACLA that year also honored the memory of Said on the tenth anniversary of his death with a plenary session devoted to his work and influence. Several of the contributors to this volume—among them, Cameron Bushnell, Jeffrey Hole, Kristine Kelly, Elizabeth Syrkin, Emel Tastekin, Darwin Tsen, and Charlie Wesley—presented early versions of their chapters at this event, and we have all benefited from the enthusiastic comments of the participants and audience. I am particularly grateful to the ACLA’s excellent officers, organizers, and staff, who make possible such enlivening and important critical discussions. The association’s commitment to comparative literature, underscoring the intrinsic value of literary criticism, history, and theory, well reflects Said’s own critical legacies, which demonstrate just how crucial these apparently old-fashioned concepts and practices are for any project that hopes to engage productively with the all-too-real world in which we live.

I want to thank all of the contributors for their excellent essays. I would also like to thank various scholars whose insightful comments and encouragement have helped me in organizing this collection. These include Susan Z. Andrade, Paul A. Bové, Simon C. Estok,
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By definition, a legacy presupposes a powerful connection with the past, but legacies clearly belong to the present and, in the best cases, provide for an improved future. I hope that The Geocritical Legacies of Edward W. Said honors Said’s immense contributions to twentieth-century cultural criticism, largely by demonstrating their continuing significance in contemporary critical practices, but ultimately by suggesting some of the ways in which this work may be of use to the literary criticism, history, and theory to come. Amid the shifting spaces of a complex geopolitical, transnational, and multicultural world system, emerging scholars and critics are perhaps best suited to the task of making sense of the ways in which we try to make sense of our world, thereby also, occasionally and with no small amount of luck, making that world a better place.